1 2	KAMALA D. HARRIS Attorney General of California FRANK H. PACOE Supervising Deputy Attorney General		
3	JONATHAN D. COOPER Deputy Attorney General		
4	State Bar No. 141461 455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 11000	•	
5	San Francisco, CA 94102-7004 Telephone: (415) 703-1404		
6	Facsimile: (415) 703-5480 Attorneys for Complainant		
7	BEFORE THE		
8	BOARD OF REGISTERED NURSING DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS		
9	STATE OF CALIFORNIA		
10	In the Matter of the Accusation Against:	Case No. 2011-993	
11	LAURA CATHARINE WAHPEPAH		
12	aka Laura Catharine Bruce 4516 Fran Way	ACCUSATION	
13	Richmond, CA 94803		
14	Registered Nurse License No. RN 557888 Public Health Nurse Certificate No. PHN 61564		
15	Nurse Practitioner Certificate No. NP 12723 Nurse Practitioner Furnishing No. NPF 12723		
16	Respondent.	·	
17	·		
18	Complainant alleges:		
19	<u>PARTIES</u>		
20	1. Louise R. Bailey, M.Ed., RN (Complainant) brings this Accusation solely in her		
21	official capacity as the Executive Officer of the Board of Registered Nursing, Department of		
22	Consumer Affairs.		
23	2. On or about July 30, 1999, the Board of Registered Nursing issued Registered Nurse		
24	License Number RN 557888 to Laura Catharine Wahpepah, aka Laura Catharine Bruce		
25	(Respondent). The Registered Nurse License was in full force and effect at all times relevant to		
26	the charges brought herein and will expire on February 28, 2013, unless renewed.		
27	3. On or about December 10, 1999, the Board of Registered Nursing issued Public		
28	Health Nurse Certificate No. PHN 61564 to Laura Catharine Wahpepah, aka Laura Catharine		
	. 1	•	

Bruce (Respondent). The Public Health Nurse Certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on February 28, 2013, unless renewed.

- 4. On or about August 3, 2001, the Board of Registered Nursing issued Nurse Practitioner Certificate No. NP 12723 to Laura Catharine Wahpepah, aka Laura Catharine Bruce (Respondent). The Nurse Practitioner certificate was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on February 28, 2013, unless renewed.
- 5. On or about April 8, 2002, the Board of Registered Nursing issued Nurse Practitioner Furnishing No. NPF 12723 to Laura Catharine Wahpepah, aka Laura Catharine Bruce (Respondent). The Nurse Practitioner Furnishing Number was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on February 28, 2013, unless renewed.

JURISDICTION

- 6. This Accusation is brought before the Board of Registered Nursing (Board), Department of Consumer Affairs, under the authority of the following laws. All section references are to the Business and Professions Code unless otherwise indicated.
- 7. Section 2750 of the Business and Professions Code (Code) provides, in pertinent part, that the Board may discipline any licensee, including a licensee holding a temporary or an inactive license, for any reason provided in Article 3 (commencing with section 2750) of the Nursing Practice Act.
- 8. Section 2764 of the Code provides, in pertinent part, that the expiration of a license shall not deprive the Board of jurisdiction to proceed with a disciplinary proceeding against the licensee or to render a decision imposing discipline on the license. Under section 2811(b) of the Code, the Board may renew an expired license at any time within eight years after the expiration.

STATUTORY AND REGULATORY PROVISIONS

- 9. Section 2052 of the Code states:
- (a) Notwithstanding Section 146, any person who practices or attempts to practice, or who advertises or holds himself or herself out as practicing, any system or mode of treating the sick or afflicted in this state, or who diagnoses, treats, operates for, or prescribes for any ailment, blemish, deformity, disease, disfigurement, disorder, injury, or other physical or mental condition

of any person, without having at the time of so doing a valid, unrevoked, or unsuspended certificate [to practice medicine] or without being authorized to perform the act pursuant to a certificate obtained in accordance with some other provision of law is guilty of a public offense, punishable by a fine not exceeding ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), by imprisonment in the state prison, by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year, or by both the fine and either imprisonment.

- (b) Any person who conspires with or aids or abets another to commit any act described in subdivision (a) is guilty of a public offense, subject to the punishment described in that subdivision.
- (c) The remedy provided in this section shall not preclude any other remedy provided by law.
 - 10. Section 2726 of the Code states:

Except as otherwise provided herein, this chapter confers no authority to practice medicine or surgery.

11. Section 2761 of the Code states, in pertinent part:

The board may take disciplinary action against a certified or licensed nurse or deny an application for a certificate or license for any of the following:

- (a) Unprofessional conduct, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- (1) Incompetence, or gross negligence in carrying out usual certified or licensed nursing functions.
- (d) Violating or attempting to violate, directly or indirectly, or assisting in or abetting the violating of, or conspiring to violate any provision or term of this chapter or regulations adopted pursuant to it.
- (h) Impersonating another certified or licensed practitioner, or permitting or allowing another person to use his or her certificate or license for the purpose of nursing the sick or afflicted.

12. Section 2762 of the Code states, in pertinent part:

In addition to other acts constituting unprofessional conduct within the meaning of this chapter [the Nursing Practice Act], it is unprofessional conduct for a person licensed under this chapter to do any of the following:

(a) Obtain or possess in violation of law, or prescribe, or except as directed by a licensed physician and surgeon, dentist, or podiatrist administer to himself or herself, or furnish or administer to another, any controlled substance as defined in Division 10 (commencing with Section 11000) of the Health and Safety Code or any dangerous drug or dangerous device as defined in Section 4022.

. . .

13. Section 2836.1 of the Code states:

Neither this chapter nor any other provision of law shall be construed to prohibit a nurse practitioner from furnishing or ordering drugs or devices when all of the following apply:

- (a) The drugs or devices are furnished or ordered by a nurse practitioner in accordance with standardized procedures or protocols developed by the nurse practitioner and the supervising physician and surgeon when the drugs or devices furnished or ordered are consistent with the practitioner's educational preparation or for which clinical competency has been established and maintained.
- (b) The nurse practitioner is functioning pursuant to standardized procedure, as defined by Section 2725, or protocol. The standardized procedure or protocol shall be developed and approved by the supervising physician and surgeon, the nurse practitioner, and the facility administrator or the designee.
- (c)(1) The standardized procedure or protocol covering the furnishing of drugs or devices shall specify which nurse practitioners may furnish or order drugs or devices, which drugs or devices may be furnished or ordered, under what circumstances, the extent of physician and surgeon supervision, the method of periodic review of the nurse practitioner's competence, including peer review, and review of the provisions of the standardized procedure.
 - (2) In addition to the requirements in paragraph (1), for Schedule II controlled substance

protocols, the provision for furnishing Schedule II controlled substances shall address the diagnosis of the illness, injury, or condition for which the Schedule II controlled substance is to be furnished.

- (d) The furnishing or ordering of drugs or devices by a nurse practitioner occurs under physician and surgeon supervision. Physician and surgeon supervision shall not be construed to require the physical presence of the physician, but does include (1) collaboration on the development of the standardized procedure, (2) approval of the standardized procedure, and (3) availability by telephonic contact at the time of patient examination by the nurse practitioner.
- (e) For purposes of this section, no physician and surgeon shall supervise more than four nurse practitioners at one time.
- (f)(1) Drugs or devices furnished or ordered by a nurse practitioner may include Schedule II through Schedule V controlled substances under the California Uniform Controlled Substances Act (Division 10 (commencing with Section 11000) of the Health and Safety Code) and shall be further limited to those drugs agreed upon by the nurse practitioner and physician and surgeon and specified in the standardized procedure.
- (2) When Schedule II or III controlled substances, as defined in Sections 11055 and 11056, respectively, of the Health and Safety Code, are furnished or ordered by a nurse practitioner, the controlled substances shall be furnished or ordered in accordance with a patient-specific protocol approved by the treating or supervising physician. A copy of the section of the nurse practitioner's standardized procedure relating to controlled substances shall be provided, upon request, to any licensed pharmacist who dispenses drugs or devices, when there is uncertainty about the nurse practitioner furnishing the order.
- (g)(1) The board has certified in accordance with Section 2836.3 that the nurse practitioner has satisfactorily completed (1) at least six month's physician and surgeon-supervised experience in the furnishing or ordering of drugs or devices and (2) a course in pharmacology covering the drugs or devices to be furnished or ordered under this section.
- (2) Nurse practitioners who are certified by the board and hold an active furnishing number, who are authorized through standardized procedures or protocols to furnish Schedule II controlled

substances, and who are registered with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, shall complete, as part of their continuing education requirements, a course including Schedule II controlled substances based on the standards developed by the board. The board shall establish the requirements for satisfactory completion of this subdivision.

- (h) Use of the term "furnishing" in this section, in health facilities defined in Section 1250 of the Health and Safety Code, shall include (1) the ordering of a drug or device in accordance with the standardized procedure and (2) transmitting an order of a supervising physician and surgeon.
- (i) "Drug order" or "order" for purposes of this section means an order for medication which is dispensed to or for an ultimate user, issued by a nurse practitioner as an individual practitioner, within the meaning of Section 1306.02 of Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, (1) a drug order issued pursuant to this section shall be treated in the same manner as a prescription of the supervising physician; (2) all references to "prescription" in this code and the Health and Safety Code shall include drug orders issued by nurse practitioners; and (3) the signature of a nurse practitioner on a drug order issued in accordance with this section shall be deemed to be the signature of a prescriber for purposes of this code and the Health and Safety Code.

14. Section **2836.2** of the Code states:

Furnishing or ordering of drugs or devices by nurse practitioners is defined to mean the act of making a pharmaceutical agent or agents available to the patient in strict accordance with a standardized procedure. All nurse practitioners who are authorized pursuant to Section 2831.1 to furnish or issue drug orders for controlled substances shall register with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

15. Section 2836.3 of the Code states:

(a) The furnishing of drugs or devices by nurse practitioners is conditional on issuance by the board of a number to the nurse applicant who has successfully completed the requirements of subdivision (g) of Section 2836.1. The number shall be included on all transmittals of orders for drugs or devices by the nurse practitioner. The board shall make the list of numbers issued

available to the Board of Pharmacy. The board may charge the applicant a fee to cover all necessary costs to implement this section.

- (b) The number shall be renewable at the time of the applicant's registered nurse license renewal.
- (c) The board may revoke, suspend, or deny issuance of the numbers for incompetence or gross negligence in the performance of functions specified in Sections 2836.1 and 2836.2.
 - 16. California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 1442, states:

As used in Section 2761 of the code, 'gross negligence' includes an extreme departure from the standard of care which, under similar circumstances, would have ordinarily been exercised by a competent registered nurse. Such an extreme departure means the repeated failure to provide nursing care as required or failure to provide care or to exercise ordinary precaution in a single situation which the nurse knew, or should have known, could have jeopardized the client's health or life.

17. California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 1443, states:

As used in Section 2761 of the code, 'incompetence' means the lack of possession of or the failure to exercise that degree of learning, skill, care and experience ordinarily possessed and exercised by a competent registered nurse as described in Section 1443.5.

18. California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 1443.5 states:

A registered nurse shall be considered to be competent when he/she consistently demonstrates the ability to transfer scientific knowledge from social, biological and physical sciences in applying the nursing process, as follows:

- (1) Formulates a nursing diagnosis through observation of the client's physical condition and behavior, and through interpretation of information obtained from the client and others, including the health team.
- (2) Formulates a care plan, in collaboration with the client, which ensures that direct and indirect nursing care services provide for the client's safety, comfort, hygiene, and protection, and for disease prevention and restorative measures.
 - (3) Performs skills essential to the kind of nursing action to be taken, explains the health

treatment to the client and family and teaches the client and family how to care for the client's health needs.

- (4) Delegates tasks to subordinates based on the legal scopes of practice of the subordinates and on the preparation and capability needed in the tasks to be delegated, and effectively supervises nursing care being given by subordinates.
- (5) Evaluates the effectiveness of the care plan through observation of the client's physical condition and behavior, signs and symptoms of illness, and reactions to treatment and through communication with the client and health team members, and modifies the plan as needed.
- (6) Acts as the client's advocate, as circumstances require, by initiating action to improve health care or to change decisions or activities which are against the interests or wishes of the client, and by giving the client the opportunity to make informed decisions about health care before it is provided.
 - 19. California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 1444, states:

A conviction or act shall be considered to be substantially related to the qualifications, functions or duties of a registered nurse if to a substantial degree it evidences the present or potential unfitness of a registered nurse to practice in a manner consistent with the public health, safety, or welfare. Such convictions or acts shall include but not be limited to the following:

- (a) Assaultive or abusive conduct including, but not limited to, those violations listed in subdivision (d) of Penal Code Section 11160.
 - (b) Failure to comply with any mandatory reporting requirements.
 - (c) Theft, dishonesty, fraud, or deceit.
- (d) Any conviction or act subject to an order of registration pursuant to Section 290 of the Penal Code.

DANGEROUS DRUG/CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

- 20. Section 4021 of the Code states:
- "Controlled substance" means any substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code.
 - 21. Section 4022 of the Code states:

"Dangerous drug" or "dangerous device" means any drug or device unsafe for self-use, except veterinary drugs that are labeled as such, and includes the following:

- (a) Any drug that bears the legend: "Caution: federal law prohibits dispensing without prescription," "Rx only," or words of similar import.
- (b) Any device that bears the statement: "Caution: federal law restricts this device to sale by or on the order of a ______," "Rx only," or words of similar import, the blank to be filled in with the designation of the practitioner licensed to use or order use of the device.
- (c) Any other drug or device that by federal or state law can be lawfully dispensed only on prescription or furnished pursuant to Section 4006."
 - 22. Section 4051(a) of the Code states:
- (a) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to manufacture, compound, furnish, sell, or dispense any dangerous drug or dangerous device, or to dispense or compound any prescription pursuant to Section 4040 of a prescriber unless he or she is a pharmacist under this chapter.

23. Section 4060 of the Code states:

No person shall possess any controlled substance, except that furnished to a person upon the prescription of a physician, dentist, podiatrist, optometrist, or veterinarian, or furnished pursuant to a drug order issued by a certified nurse-midwife pursuant to Section 2746.51, a nurse practitioner pursuant to Section 2836.1, a physician assistant pursuant to Section 3502.1, or a pharmacist pursuant to either subparagraph (D) of paragraph (4) of, or clause (iv) of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (5) of, subdivision (a) of Section 4052. This section shall not apply to the possession of any controlled substance by a manufacturer, wholesaler, pharmacy, pharmacist, physician, podiatrist, dentist, optometrist, veterinarian, certified nurse-midwife, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, when in stock in containers correctly labeled with the name and address of the supplier or producer. Nothing in this section authorizes a certified nurse-midwife, a nurse practitioner, or a physician assistant to order his or her own stock of dangerous drugs and devices.

24. Vicodin, also known as Norco, is a combination of acetaminophen and **Hydrocodone**, a schedule III controlled substance as designated by Health and Safety Code

section 11056(e)(4), and a dangerous drug within the meaning of Code section 4022.

25. Yaz, also known as drospirenone and ethinyl estradiol, is a dangerous drug within the meaning of Code section 4022.

COSTS

26. Section 125.3 of the Code provides, in pertinent part, that the Board may request the administrative law judge to direct a licentiate found to have committed a violation or violations of the licensing act to pay a sum not to exceed the reasonable costs of the investigation and enforcement of the case.

FACTUAL SUMMARY

- 27. During 2007, 2008 and 2009, Respondent worked as a nurse practitioner for the Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation's San Rafael Clinic in San Rafael, California.
- 28. At various times during 2007, 2008 and 2009, Respondent wrote prescriptions for, and filled said prescriptions, for Vicodin for her daughter, who was not a patient of the San Rafael Clinic and had not been examined by a physician at the clinic in relation to these prescriptions. Nothing in the standardized procedures or the drug formulary at the San Rafael Clinic authorized Respondent to so prescribe, obtain or furnish Vicodin. The prescriptions were written as follows:
 - a. On or about August 31, 2007, Respondent prescribed Vicodin, 50 tablets, for her daughter. Respondent placed a check mark next to the name of Albert C. Goldberg, M.D., and signed the prescription illegibly, thus creating the impression that Dr. Goldberg had issued the prescription. The prescription included three re-fills.
 - b. On or about November 27, 2007, Respondent prescribed Vicodin, 50 tablets, for her daughter. Respondent placed a check mark next to the name of Albert C. Goldberg, M.D., and signed the prescription illegibly, thus creating the impression that Dr. Goldberg had issued the prescription. The prescription included three re-fills.
 - c. On or about February 13, 2008, Respondent prescribed Vicodin, 50 tablets, for her daughter. Respondent placed a check mark next to the name of Albert C. Goldberg, M.D., and signed the prescription illegibly, thus creating the impression that Dr. Goldberg had issued the prescription. The prescription included three re-fills.

- d. On or about April 30, 2008, Respondent prescribed Vicodin, 50 tablets, for her daughter. Respondent placed a check mark next to the name of Albert C. Goldberg, M.D., and signed the prescription illegibly, thus creating the impression that Dr. Goldberg had issued the prescription. The prescription included three re-fills.
- e. On or about March 27, 2009, Respondent prescribed Vicodin, 50 tablets, for her daughter. Respondent placed a check mark next to the name of Albert C. Goldberg, M.D., and signed the prescription illegibly, thus creating the impression that Dr. Goldberg had issued the prescription. The prescription included three re-fills.
- f. On or about July 17, 2009, Respondent prescribed Vicodin, 50 tablets, for her daughter. Respondent placed a check mark next to the name of Albert C. Goldberg, M.D., and signed the prescription illegibly, thus creating the impression that Dr. Goldberg had issued the prescription. The prescription included three re-fills. The prescription was filled on July 18, 2009. The prescription was re-filled on August 11, 2009, September 6, 2009 and September 17, 2009.
- g. On or about October 14, 2009, Respondent prescribed Vicodin, 50 tablets, for her daughter. Respondent circled the name of Albert C. Goldberg, M.D., and signed the prescription illegibly, thus creating the impression that Dr. Goldberg had issued the prescription. The prescription included three re-fills. The prescription was filled on October 14, 2009. The prescription was re-filled on November 11, 2009 and December 8, 2009.
- 29. At various times during 2008 and 2009, Respondent wrote prescriptions for, and obtained and filled said prescriptions, for Yaz for her daughter, who was not a patient of the San Rafael Clinic and had not been examined by a physician at the clinic in relation to this prescription. Nothing in the standardized procedures at the San Rafael Clinic authorized Respondent to so prescribe, obtain or furnish Yaz. The prescriptions were as follows:
 - a. On or about October 9, 2008, Respondent prescribed Yaz for her daughter. Respondent placed a check mark next to the name of Albert C. Goldberg, M.D., and signed the prescription illegibly, thus creating the impression that Dr. Goldberg had issued the

FIFTH CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Fraudulently Obtaining Dangerous Drugs)

Respondent is subject to disciplinary action under sections 2761(a) and 2762(a) of the Code and under California Code of Regulations, Title 16, section 1444, in that she engaged in unprofessional conduct and engaged in dishonesty, fraud and deceit in obtaining dangerous drugs, as set forth above in paragraphs 26-28.

SIXTH CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Impersonating Licensed Practitioner)

Respondent is subject to disciplinary action under section 2761(h) of the Code in that she impersonated another licensed practitioner, namely Dr. Goldberg, as set forth above in paragraphs 26-28.

///

///

///

26

27

28

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, Complainant requests that a hearing be held on the matters herein alleged, and that following the hearing, the Board of Registered Nursing issue a decision:

- Revoking or suspending Registered Nurse License Number RN 557888, issued to 1. Laura Catharine Wahpepah, aka Laura Catharine Bruce;
- Revoking or suspending Public Health Nurse Certificate No. PHN 61564, issued to 2. Laura Catharine Wahpepah, aka Laura Catharine Bruce;
- Revoking or suspending Nurse Practitioner Certificate No. NP 12723, issued to Laura Catharine Wahpepah, aka Laura Catharine Bruce;
- Revoking or suspending Nurse Practitioner Furnishing No. NPF 12723, issued to Laura Catharine Wahpepah, aka Laura Catharine Bruce;
- Ordering Respondent to pay the Board of Registered Nursing the reasonable costs of the investigation and enforcement of this case, pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 125.3;

6.	6. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.		
DATED:	Juno	20 2011	Louise L. Baile
			LOUISE R. BAILEY, M.ED., RN Executive Officer
			Board of Registered Nursing Department of Consumer Affairs State of California
			State of California Complainant
		•	
	•		
		·	
	*		
	*		
	•		
	6. DATED:	<i>A</i>	

Accusation